

## [I had been sitting in the cafeteria]

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Remarks

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W8153 1. Terry Roth New York [?] I had been sitting in the Cafeteria for quite some time. There was nothing I had to attend to, and the steady rain discouraged any movement on my part. So home I was, starting I started on another cup of coffee. [?][?][?][?] I had noticed my neighbor sitting opposite to me. A well built man, about 50 years old, I should say. He sat there reading the morning papers and occasionally he looked up at me, shaking his head and clicking his tongue. I don't know who started to speak first. Maybe he said, "Pass the sugar, please," or "What a terrible day," or maybe he just [?] talked on of the news. But before long we were discussing the plight of the Jewish people and the threat of war.

"The way you look at me, "he said, I'm an old man. Not so old that I'm useless, you understand. In front of my machine I'm still young. I'm an operator, ladies dresses. But if they should give gave me a gun and tell told me, "Go fight those Nazis, "I would go in a minute. After all, someone must stop him. # Maybe you don't agree with me. Maybe you think like my children. To them, this is a free country. Why should I worry about what's happening over there? They tell me I should better make myself a good American. How do you like that? # Not that I have anything against my children.

I'm very contented content with my family. Thank God I riased raised them they should be healthy. And I gave them a good education. They didn't have to go out and work before the bones were strong. Not that I'm asking any credit, you should understand. But I wanted they should have a better life from the life we knew. And in the end of it, I'm not sorry. I raised a nice family. I have four children. One of my girls, before she got married, she worked for Montgomery for \$12,000 a year. And now her husband, 2 2

knock on wood, even in bad times like this, is making \$300 a week. And I have one son, a doctor. So I'm content.

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I only did what any good father wants to do. Trying to make a living with my ten fingers. And I never kicked and I never was sick in my life up till now, a man of fifty four years old. That's a good record, no?

When I talk to the children about how it used to be, they don't want to hear. To me I think those stories would be interesting. Not that I want they should praise me, you understand. I only did what any good father would do. But it does a man good to say what's in his mind. And I think maybe it would make them [?] know what it means to have to run away from the old country and try to keep alive, even in this wonderful America. [?]The way I see you, you look like an intelligent girl. If you just say a word, I wouldn't feel angry. Maybe you have something to do now? No? Then if you think you would like to sit here for a while, maybe until it should stop raining, we can have a nice conversation. To you it might be like a story. I'll give you a picture of how it was. And I'll make it short.

When the immigrants used to come to this country, I don't say they were smarter to work up to work for themselves. Naturally, they knew how they were living. So those that came first, they used to take a greena soon he used to come here, for learning a trade. [?]

My father used to live on a farm. So what did I know of a trade? So when I came to this country, I had a sister here. So she said to me the best thing is for me to start learning a cloakmaker.

'Find out a man with work,' she says, 'give him gen ten dollars and work two weeks for nothing.'

I found out a lontsmon. I knew him yet from London in 1900. 3 3

That time there was a crisis for the greena. The people are actually starving. They were laying in the street. Starving from hunger. So, I met this lontsmon. He was standing in the street. I w

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I was well off already. So I took him home. And I give him a suit of clothes. And a pair of shoes. And I fixed him up something to eat. Then I went away and all the time I used to write him letters.

When I came to the United States he was a long time cloakmaker. Since he is over here. So he says to me when I'm asking he should teach me to be a cloakmaker.

'Myself, I would learn you for nothing. But my partner wouldn't let me.'

So I gave him ten dollars and for two weeks I worked for nothing. The third week he gives me two and a half dollars.

After all, I was a big fellow. Twenty three years old. So after I was working about three weeks I said to him.

'Simon, how's about learning me a little more?' So he says. 'Gold,' (my name is Gold) 'if you would be a stranger, it would be difficult. But being you are a friend, it's different. Now it's busy. Work whatever we give you to turn out. And when it'll come the slow season, I'm learning you from A to Z.'

I took his word for it. And I worked the season. And then, his partner lets me off. He don't want me no more. For the next season he isn't needing me.

Who is going to take a greena? And pay nine or ten dollars? After all, I didn't know the trade. So I ate up all the money. And I had no trade.

Then I met another feller. 'I'll learn you', he says to me. 4 4

'Pay me ten dollars and work two weeks for nothing. So I paid twice. That feller really learned me the trade.

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That's how it was. Those bosses. They would look on your face and see the character. Me! I was always easy going, the way you look at me now. So with me they could do that.

It didn't take long I found a shop on East Broadway. At that time I was living on Henry Street. Naturally, there was a President of the Shul. And the boss from this shop, he was also the President. He practically didn't pay the people anything for their work. The cheapest labor he used to have. [?]

After we are working a long time, we came over to him for a raise. Well. Everyone HAS to belong to a Shul. And it so happened that we are belonging to his Shul.

So we asked him. "How is it about a raise?"

'Oh,' he says, 'times is bad. How can I raise you? I'm losing money. If you want the truth, I should lay you all off. But after all, aren't you my lontsmon? If we don't look out for our own, who else? I'll tell you what. Next Saturday, come to the Shul and I'll give you an "aleah."'

You know what it means an aleah? He'll give you the honor you should walk up on the stage in the temple when he is reading the torah.

You think that's all he was? I should know? He was a regular department store. Also he was agent to sell tickets on the boat to bring over the wives. Or, let us say, someone was bringing over a family. So he was selling tickets for the boat to take over the greenas.

The wages, at that time, for a cloakmaker was fifteen dollars. By him, you used to work for seven. Or five dollars. After I was working for a few months, all the shops are starting to unionize. So he was having trouble in the shop and the workers 5 don't want any "aleahs".

When he sees this don't help, he calls me over.

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'Chiam, how long you're here? Why don't you bring over your wife? By me, it's NO LIFE if a family is in two pieces. You think it's right, Chiam?'

'How can I?' I asked him. 'You think maybe I can save from those wages?'

'Alright,' he says. 'So I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll give you a ticket. And I'll take out of the wages.'

So already he had me tied again to work another year. What else could I do. At least I would have my own place with my own family, I shouldn't have to be a boarder.

But all the time the strikes were getting worse and that boss was having his troubles. Then he saw it's bad, he comes down to the shop. First, he got a telegram, made by himself to him. WITH A STORY. That maybe the Shul in the old country is burning. Of some lonsman's family is sick. Or something like that.

He called us all together and told us what is happening. 'And I am giving for this purpose \$100, unless I'll have to give 10% more wages.'

Well? We were involved. After all, in the old country is still our fathers, mothers, brothers, wives. So we all started to work again.

Like that, always he had some craziness to keep us. But when we were no longer greenas, we used to tell him. 'We have you in Hell, with the shul, with the tickets, with the beard, with everything.'